

Evangelist John R. Rice Teaches The Truth That The "Rapture" Happens Before The Tribulation

by David J. Stewart | March 2016

Luke 21:25-28, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

I have in front of me a verse-by-verse commentary of the book of "Luke: The Son Of Man," by Dr. John R. Rice (1895-1980). Here is a helpful quote by Dr. Rice, which asserts the Biblical doctrine of a pretribulation Rapture:



Pay particular attention to the fact that the Rapture of the saints, the coming of Christ in the air to receive His own, foretold in I Thessalonians 4:14-18 and in I Corinthians 15:51,52 is not mentioned here. God does not let His timetable be known: the rapture of the saints is an event kept secret until it occurs. No one knows or can know when that will occur, and Jesus does not tell or give any hint here as to just when it will occur.

In verse 20, Jews in Jerusalem, surrounded by Titus' army, were able to know that the desolation was near. After the Tribulation time (as Matt. 24:29 plainly says) there will be tremendous signs in the sun, moon and stars, and awful trouble on earth, then people will see Christ in His glory coming to fight the battle of Armageddon and set up His kingdom on earth. They will see Him coming in clouds, as pictured in Revelation 19:11-16 and Jude, verse 14, and in Zechariah 14:3,4. Then Jews and others converted in the Tribulation time will see these things begin to come to pass and they will look up, for their redemption from the Antichrist and from the troubles of the Tribulation will be drawing near!

SOURCE: Dr. John R. Rice, *Luke: The Son Of Man*; ©1971, *Sword Of The Lord* publishers, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; ISBN: 0-87398-767-5.

As you just read by Evangelist John R. Rice, the Rapture is not mentioned in our text verses from Luke 21:25-28. This passage parallels Matthew 24:29-51. We are told that the sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars will fall from the heavens, tsunamis and earthquakes will terrorize the earth, when men shall drop dead of massive heart-attacks from fear. **Matthew 24:21, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."** It is AFTER this woeful time of Great Tribulation that the Lord Jesus Christ will appear from Heaven, and set foot upon the earth in Jerusalem. The Lord will defeat the False Prophet, the Antichrist and his armies. Jesus Christ will set up His millennium kingdom upon the earth.

Clearly, which you can plainly see for yourself, it is Christ's Second Coming TO the earth that happens AFTER THE TRIBULATION, and not the Rapture of the saints FROM the earth. The Rapture will happen BEFORE THE TRIBULATION!!!

[The Rapture And Glorious Appearing of Jesus Christ](#) (a tract by Evangelist Edward E. Hindson)

Beware Of Heresy Creeping Into The Churches

Respectfully, I admire Pastor Steven L. Anderson of the Faithful Word Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona. I enjoy listening to most of his sermons. Yet, I sincerely believe that he is 100% wrong to deny the Rapture. Pastor Anderson has gone to great lengths to deny a pretribulation Rapture and promote what's called a "PreWrath Rapture." In actuality, he denies the Rapture completely, because he teaches that Christ's Second Coming and the Rapture are THE SAME EVENT! I believe they are not the same event. I believe the Scripture teaches that these two prophetic events will happen [SEVEN YEARS](#) apart from each other.

I also disagree with Pastor Anderson about a Young Earth. I believe and teach [an Old Earth](#), which is Biblical. I certainly don't think it is okay for women to show their breasts in public while feeding their infants! Nor do I believe that Jesus went to suffer in the fires of Hell for three days, because Jesus plainly told the repentant thief on the cross they'd be together in "PARADISE" that very day. I also disagree with Pastor Anderson that God hates homosexuals, when the Bible plainly teaches **"For God so loved the world" (John 3:16a)**. God hates sin, and He does not accept the person of the wicked, but He still loves them unconditionally. We must never accept the sin with the sinner, nor reject the sinner with the sin. God is not willing for **"ANY"** to perish (2nd Peter 3:9).



And, respectfully, I totally disagree with Pastor Anderson that Jesus couldn't possibly return at any time! The Bible plainly teaches that every Christian believer ought to watch for our Savior's return, which would be unnecessary if we know when He's coming back. If Steve Anderson is correct that Jesus cannot return until AFTER the Tribulation, then there's absolutely no reason to look for the Lord now. This goes against the plain teachings of the Scriptures. **Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."**

Syndicated radio host, Alex Jones, has been a big supporter of Steven Anderson's PreWrath Rapture theory. They've sold millions of copies of the films, ["AFTER THE TRIBULATION"](#) and ["THE BOOK OF REVELATION."](#) I'm telling you THE TRUTH for free! It appears that Alex Jones, Paul Wittenberger, Texe Marrs and others are greatly profiting from the sale of millions of videos promoting the heresy of a PostTribulation Rapture, et cetera. I am leery of anything that makes millions-of-dollars for the producers, because they have a self-invested interest. Steve Anderson's [movie "After The Tribulation" is sold on Amazon.com](#) for \$20 each. Alex Jones has a net worth in the millions! I've never heard Alex Jones preach the Gospel, or even give a clear testimony that he is a born-again Christian. I have [heard him teach works salvation](#) numerous times. I've also [heard Alex promote the satanic Catholic church](#). Alex bashes fundamental preachers all the time! Pastor Anderson teaches what is known as a "PreWrath Rapture." This is the teaching that the Church will suffer through the Tribulation, but then be caught up (raptured) "After The Tribulation" before God's fierce wrath is poured out upon the wicked unsaved world. Kindly, this is totally unbiblical. Christ doesn't return before all that apocalyptic stuff happens! If you stop and think about what Pastor Anderson is teaching (effectively denying the Rapture entirely), that alone is enough reason to hold to a PreTribulation Rapture doctrinal position, which I strongly do.

I am not trying to be unkind nor make fun of Alex Jones' ignorance of the Scriptures, but if you listen to him, he always refers to the book of "Revelation" (singular) as "Revelations" (plural). It's the *REVELATION* of Jesus Christ! (Revelation 1:1). It's never plural! Alex can't even get the name of the book right, yet he makes bold criticisms of Baptist preachers and speaks with authority about spiritual matters that he clearly doesn't understand, to his own destruction (2nd Peter 3:16). Since 2002, I've never heard Alex share a direct Gospel testimony that he is a born-again Christian. **2nd Corinthians 2:17, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."**

Anyone who says that Jesus couldn't return at any moment is teaching heresy! One of the distinctives of the Christian faith is the belief that Christ might return at any moment, without any signs, suddenly, imminently and assuredly (Luke 13:32-37). Although the Apostles didn't know about the Rapture, because it was still "a mystery" until later revealed by the Apostle Paul (1st Corinthians 15:52-57), Jesus certainly did know, just as He was able to describe vivid details of the Tribulation period in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. Albeit, I do not think the Lord is speaking about the Rapture in Matthew 24. It would seem that He is though in Mark 13, because He concludes the chapter by stressing the truth that NO MAN KNOWS the timing of Christ's return. That to me can only mean A PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE!

Furthermore, it is a false teaching that God will rapture the saints after the Tribulation, and then no one will be saved during God's pouring out of wrath on the wicked. This presents a big theological problem, because the Bible teaches that there will be humans living during the 1,000 millennial period, when Christ reigns over the earth from the throne of David. Where do those humans come from? Clearly, they would have to come out of the Tribulation period. This disproves any theory of a PreWrath Rapture, where all the saints are removed and the wicked are all destroyed. Again, only a Pretribulation Rapture makes sense. There will be many people saved during the Tribulation period. There will be 144,000 Jewish soul-winners during the Tribulation period.

As Brother John R. Rice teaches, the Rapture is an event kept secret. It will happen in the twinkling of an eye, which occurs in just a small fraction of one second in time, when the saints will be "CAUGHT UP" into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1st Thessalonians 4:17). I have noticed [at least 32 differences](#) between the Rapture and Christ's Second Coming. The most obvious of which is that Jesus isn't coming to the earth at the Rapture; but rather, we (the saints) will be *caught up* into the air to meet Him.



In sharp contrast, at the glorious appearing of Christ at His Second Advent, He will descend upon the earth, just as He ascended in **Acts 1:11**, "**Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**" No one living upon the earth will see Jesus at the Rapture. Only the raptured saints will see Jesus in the air. When Jesus Christ bodily arose from the dead, only the saints saw Him, including over 500 brethren at once (1st Corinthians 15:6). The unsaved world, and those who crucified Him, did not see Him. Likewise, at the Rapture, Christ will

ONLY appear to the saints, not the unbelieving world.

So, again, it is plain to see that the events following the Tribulation CANNOT be the Rapture of the saints. Whereas there are no signs preceding the Rapture, there are intense signs preceding Christ's Second Coming. Whereas the saints are going up at the Rapture, we are coming down with the Lord at His Second Coming.

And as you can see in Luke 21:25-28, the Christians (Jews and Gentiles saved during the Tribulation) who've survived the Great Tribulation will be desperate for the Lord's redemption. They will LOOK UP for their Redeemer! Clearly, this cannot be a PreWrath Rapture, as the Lord is already returning in power and glory. This is Christ's Second Coming to fight the battle of Armageddon!!! A mythical "PreWrath Rapture" scenario just doesn't fit into Bible prophecy. I say this kindly, but truthfully. So if Luke 21:25-28 is not talking about the Rapture, which it clearly is not, then when does the Rapture happen?

By using deductive reasoning—In view of Daniel's 70th week—And the Abomination Of Desolation (Daniel 9:24-27)—And the 1,290 days from the Abomination Of Desolation to the end of the Tribulation period (Daniel 12:9-11)—And all other prophetic events (such as provision for The Judgment Seat Of Christ, 2nd Corinthians 5:9-11) and Marriage Supper Of The Lamb (Revelation 19:9)—Any honest Bible student can only LOGICALLY conclude a Pretribulation Rapture!!!

[Why The Rapture Is Not Christ's Second Coming](#) (Daniel [12:11](#) says [1,290 days before Christ!!](#))

Why Does Jesus Speak In Confusing Words In Matthew 24?

Matthew 24:33-36, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

While reading Matthew 24, it seems as if the Lord is speaking about the Rapture one moment and His Second Coming the next. The Lord seems to say that we'll know when the end is near by the signs we see, but then He says no man knows the time of His return. It certainly can get confusing, as acknowledged by Dr. Henry H. Halley:

Great Discourse on the End

Chapters 24, 25. (told also in Mark 13 and Luke 21.)

This discourse was delivered after Jesus had left the temple for the last time. It was about the Destruction of Jerusalem, His coming, and the End of the World. Some of His words are so mixed up that it is difficult to know to which event they refer. Perhaps it was intentional. It seems plain that He had in mind two distinct events, separated by an interval of time; indicated by "these" in 24:34, and "that day" in 24:36. Some would explain "this generation" (Matthew 24:34), to mean this nation, that is, the Jewish race shall not pass away till the Lord comes. The more common view is that He meant Jerusalem would be destroyed within the lifetime of those then living. To one looking at two distant mountain peaks, one behind the other, they seem close together, though they may be far apart. So in Jesus' perspective,

these two events, one in some respects typical of the other, stood in close proximity, though there is a long interval between. What He said in a sentence may be of an age. What happened in one case may be a "begun fulfillment" of what will happen in the other.

His words concerning Jerusalem were fulfilled literally, within 40 years. The magnificent buildings of marble and gold, were so completely demolished, by the Roman army (A.D. 70), that Josephus said it looked like a site that had never been inhabited.

SOURCE: Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, pp. 445-446; ©1927, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Bible teaches us as believers to "rightly divide" the Word of truth (2nd Timothy 2:15). We have to carefully dissect the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, to find the correct interpretation. Clearly, Matthew 24 needs further investigation into the Word of God to properly interpret.

Jesus' disciples asked Him why He spoke in parables:

Matthew 13:10 and 13, "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

You've got to study (rightly divide) the Bible to understand it. Please read, [After The Tribulation Comes Jesus' Second Coming](#).

Personally, I agree with Dr. Henry H. Halley that "this generation" in Matthew 24:34 refers to the Tribulation period. This is abundantly clear from Matthew 24:13-15:

Matthew 24:13-15, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

The mention of the "Abomination Of Desolation" proves that Jesus was speaking about the Tribulation period in Matthew 24.

The *Abomination of Desolation* is the event when the Antichrist stands in the temple in Jerusalem and proclaims to be God (2nd Thessalonians 2:4). This event happens exactly 3 1/2 years (halfway) into the 7-year Tribulation period. We know that the Tribulation will last for 7-years because the Bible plainly tells us in Daniel 12:9-11. We refer to it as the "Tribulation" because that's what Jesus called the last 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation in Matthew 21:24 (See also Revelation 7:14). The Bible also calls this, "The Time Of Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). Just as the word "Rapture" accurately describes the saints being "CAUGHT UP" in 1st Thessalonians 4:17; so also does the word "TRIBULATION" accurately describe the troublesome events of Daniel's 70th week. Although the word "Bible" is not found in the Word of God, we use it because it accurately describes God's holy book.

I do believe that Jesus was referring to a PREtribulation Rapture in Mark 13:32-37 when He exclaimed:

Mark 13:32-37, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

If the timing of the Rapture were to occur at any later time, then we would KNOW exactly, down to the very day, WHEN the Lord is coming back! Pastor Anderson plainly teaches in Part 10 of his 22-part series On "The Book Of Revelation" that [the saints will be Raptured 75-days after the event of the Abomination Of Desolation \(AOD\)](#). This is date-setting, which is as unscriptural as can be! Ironically, Pastor Anderson [downplays that he is setting any date](#); yet, he just set an exact time for 75-days after the AOD. This is typical forked-tongue, double-talk used by men who are confused doctrinally on the Bible. I say that respectfully.

By the way, I always try to show respect for those with whom I disagree. That's why I refer to Ray Comfort as "Evangelist Ray Comfort" and John MacArthur as "Dr. John MacArthur." God pity any fool who disrespectfully refers to Dr. Jack Hyles as "Jack." That is wicked! That's what the heathen world does! I show respect, even for false prophets, because they are still human beings. Even though he's a God hating atheist, I always refer to Stephen Hawking as "Dr. Stephen Hawking." I think that is proper and right to do. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:15 to speak the truth in love.



The truth is that Dr. Roland Rasmussen led Brother Anderson's father to the Lord, and Dr. Rasmussen teaches the SAME EXACT false doctrine of a PreWrath Rapture. While I was a student (1985-1993) at Hyles-Anderson College (HAC), Dr. Rasmussen used to preach at HAC by invitation, until Brother Hyles found out that he denied a PreTribulation Rapture, and then he was kindly informed that he couldn't preach there anymore, to avoid confusing the students. Dr. Rasmussen's camp, so-to-speak, are all PostTrib Rapture.

[A Defense Of The PreTribulation Rapture In Matthew 24:36-44](#) (book, Professor John F. Hart)

Nearly Every Great Soulwinning Man Of God Has Concluded A PreTribulation Rapture

May I humbly make the important observation that the greatest men of God of the past 150 years all believed in a [PreTribulation Rapture](#)!—Harry A. Ironside, John R. Rice, Harold Sightler, Jack Hyles, Bob Jones Sr., Lee Roberson, Oliver B. Greene, R.A. Torrey, J. Frank Norris, George W. Truett, Dwight L. Moody, Lester Roloff, Curtis Hutson, Billy Sunday, W.A. Criswell, Charles C. Ryrie, M.R. DeHaan, Merrill Under, Raymond Barber and others—all concluded and taught a Pretribulation Rapture of the saints!!! Amen! Were they all wrong on the Bible? I think not!



Evangelist Billy Sunday (1862-1935) said in his classic sermon, *"The Second Coming Of Christ"*:

The Lord does not come to the world at the time of the Rapture, but only reveals himself to the members of His Body. At the time of his resurrection He was only seen by those who believed on Him. Pilate and the High Priest, and those who crucified Him, did not know that He was risen. So it will be at the time of the Rapture. The world will not know that He has been here, and will have no knowledge of Him until He comes with the members of His Body, at the close of the Tribulation.

SOURCE: ['The Second Coming Of Christ' — by Evangelist BILLY Sunday](#)

I like Pastor Anderson's fire, even if it's wildfire. I agree with him on the evils of Zionism. I agree with him on the trustworthiness of the King James Bible, and the satanic modern Bible versions. I agree with him that today's cowardly pastors need to start standing for God. I agree with him on the Gospel, and that Lordship Salvation is of the Devil. But, humbly, I know Brother Anderson is very wrong to teach that Jesus couldn't return at any time, and that the Rapture will occur 75-days after the [Abomination Of Desolation](#).

The Bible contains approximately 30% prophecy! Rightly dividing the Scriptures is extremely important to properly interpret Bible prophecy. It would be a mistake to interpret Matthew 24 without taking into consideration the rest of the Scriptures! We know there will be a Rapture of the saints (1st Thessalonians 4:17). We know that Daniel's 70th week will last for 7 years (Daniel 12:9-11).

Here's some powerful Bible commentary concerning the doctrine of the Rapture by one of my preacher heroes, Dr. Harry A. Ironside (1876-1951). The following observation is brilliant by Dr. Ironside. The Bible makes a distinction between saints resurrected BEFORE the Tribulation at the Rapture, and the saints later resurrected AFTER the Tribulation (i.e., the saints who are martyred during the Tribulation Period). Clearly, the saints present during the Tribulation period are in a different class than the saints taken up at the Rapture. This is further conclusive evidence of a PREtribulation Rapture:

Those who are martyred under the beast and the anti-Christ in that day will be raised from the dead when the Lord descends to take the kingdom, and will thus form the last cohort of the first resurrection. Notice the order indicated in Revelation 20:4-6. First, John says, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." These are undoubtedly

identified with the saints who are raised at the Rapture before the Tribulation. Then John mentions another class...

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

These are the martyrs of the tribulation period. They have their part in the heavenly side of the kingdom. As to the unsaved, we are told in verse 5. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Verse 6 includes the entire company who have part in the various cohorts of the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

It is plain then that there will be saints on the earth during the great tribulation, but they are not members of the body of Christ, as that body is now constituted by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They will be individual believers, as in Old Testament times, and will through grace be enabled to witness for Christ in that day of great distress. They will share in the kingdom and enjoy the blessing of the Lord in a wonderful way, but they are not included in the body of Christ that occupies a distinct place through all the ages to come.

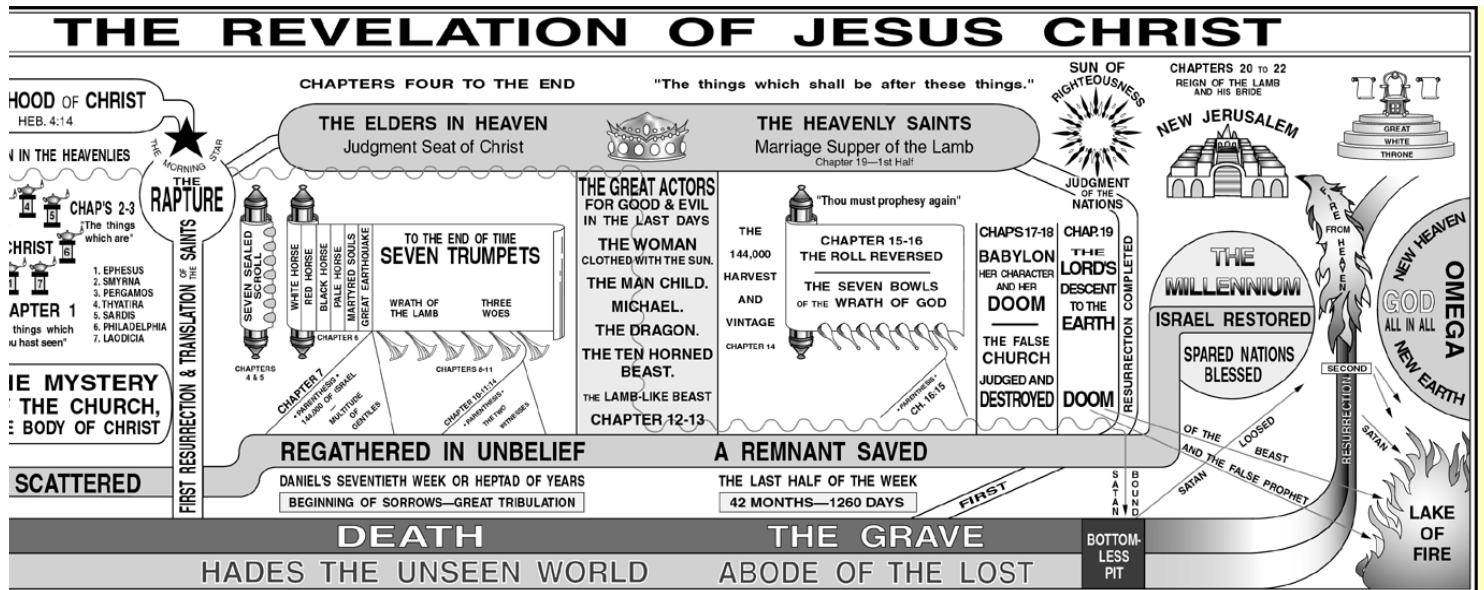
SOURCE: Dr. Harry Ironside, "[Not Wrath, But Rapture](#)"

Most theologians agree that the Bible teaches the Church must be removed from the world for the wicked Antichrist to be manifest (otherwise we'd expose him). **2nd Thessalonians 2:6-8a "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed..."** There is no question that this is a difficult Scripture passage to interpret, but taken at face value it can only mean what it seems to imply, that is, that the influence of the New Testament Church is hindering the work of the Antichrist. Certainly, the Holy Spirit cannot be removed from the world, but His influence through the Church can!

It is my humble opinion that "the mystery of iniquity" refers to the ancient mystery religion's plot for world government, which has existed since the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:7-9). Today, we refer to it as the "New World Order." Satan has been conspiring for millenniums to unite men together to worship the man of sin, Anti-Christ, instead of God. The Apostle Paul was not ignorant of these things. We see in the Egyptian, Babylonian and all historical world cultures, the ancient mystery religion (represented by the All Seeing Eye of Horus, erected obelisks, The Great Pyramid, et cetera). Bless God... I'm looking for the Uppertaker, not the undertaker!

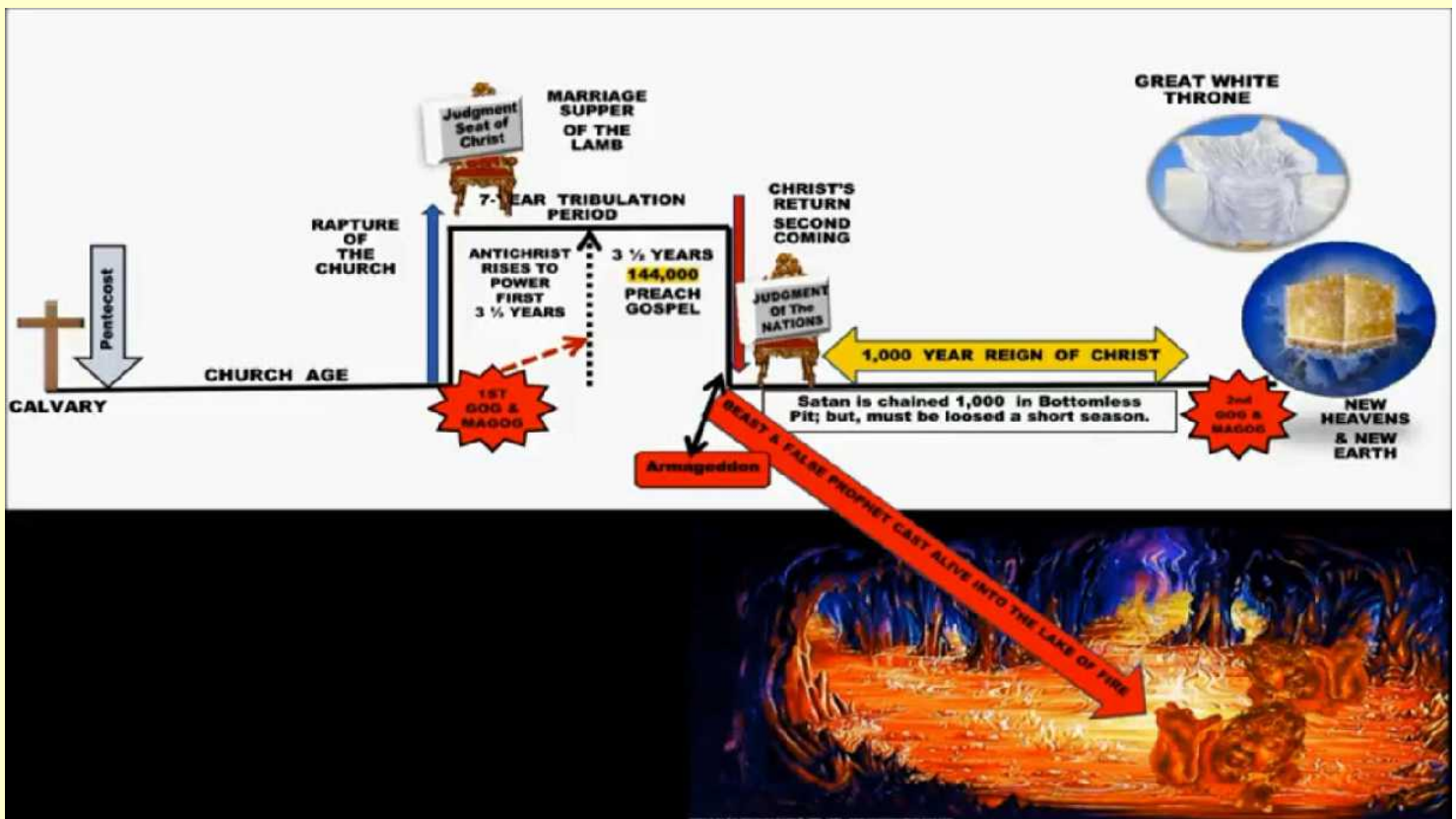
The following prophetic chart by Dr. Harry Ironside (1876-1951) is very helpful and Biblically accurate...

[Click Here For A Larger Diagram!](#)



The following prophetic chart by Dr. Max D. Younce is very helpful and Biblically accurate, taken from his excellent book on Bible prophecy titled, "[I Know Who Holds Tomorrow](#)" ([hardcopies are available](#))...

[Click Here For A Larger Diagram!](#)



THE TRUTH: Jesus may come back at any moment!

1st Corinthians 15:52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

[Ye Must Be Born Again!](#) | [You Need HIS Righteousness!](#) | [Believe The Gospel](#)

Jesus is Precious!



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